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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; ARGENTINE FOREIGN POLICY; PLAN MEXICO;
CHAVEZ AND BOLIVIA; 10/29/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend major international stories are related to the foreign policy of the future Argentine government; Plan Mexico; and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's threat to intervene militarily in Bolivia in the event someone attempts to "oust" Bolivian President Evo Morales.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "A place in the world"

Santiago O'Donnell, international analyst of left-of-center "Pagina 12," writes (10/28) "... Saying that the world does not care who will be elected Argentine president is a cliché. As in every cliché, there is something true, but it is also true that Argentine (presidential) elections are particularly important to neighboring countries... Perhaps, the most interested is Bolivian President Evo Morales. The Kirchners' have supported his ambitious transformation process in Bolivia at all levels...

"Clearly enough, Chavez is the political leader that most separates Cristina Kirchner from Lavagna and Carrio. An important official foreign policy counselor (not the FM) said that Chavez's adversaries in Argentina and overseas overestimate how dangerous he is, allegedly. 'The world changed, guerrillas are no longer an option in the region. Who will Chavez destabilize? What is so bad about him? That he meets with the Iranian president? Putin also does so, and many other presidents. When Americans tell us to stop doing business with Chavez, I answer Why don't you stop doing business with Chavez? Venezuela has 14,000 Citgo oil stations in the US. No one in the world takes seriously Chavez's alleged threat.'

"... The Argentine election will not change the center-to-left trend adopted by the region in recent years, regardless of the nuances of the liberal bloc formed by Mexico, Colombia, Peru and some Central-American countries. Argentina will further its cooperation with the US in the antiterrorist struggle, its conflict with Iran, its commitment to Mercosur, and the search for new markets. As far as the US is concerned, while it is bogged down in Iraq, it will continue to disregard the region. Europe will continue like it is. Asia is still far and the Middle East is 'burning iron' that no one wants to touch.

"... Cristina Kirchner marked the style of her future foreign policy when she took a campaign event in Mar del Plata to recall the legacy of the summit held in the city, in which the US-promoted FTAA was defeated by Mercosur. Temperamental and challenging with her opponents, seductive and curious among friends, with Madres and Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo as her emblem, keeping the country's alliance with Chavez and Lula and sending some winks to the business

world, Cristina Kirchner will impose her personal style by maintaining her husband's geopolitical alignments."

- "The border under surveillance"

Gustavo Sierra, international columnist of leading "Clarín," opines (10/28) "The US-Mexican border is plagued with sensors, TV cameras, infrared visors, surveillance satellites and even Indian guides that are able to read fingerprints on the sand. In spite of all this paraphernalia, the border remains porous.

"Now, Washington will be sending to Mexico a 1,4 billion dollar aid package for furthering its struggle against the drug trafficking between Texas and Mexico...

"... Many in Mexico believe that it would be much more effective to use those funds to raise the guards' salaries, and improve the selection of police officers and the general welfare of the inhabitants of the border. It is already proved that high technology cannot relieve hunger.

"The US, instead, intends to provide something similar to Plan Colombia, in which 5 billion dollars have been spent during the last decade to fight drug trafficking with not result whatsoever. The plan is in fact a counter-insurgent campaign that has not put an end either to drug trafficking or guerrillas.

"... Perhaps, the 1.4 billion dollar package should be used to look for the real roots of the problem. For some business to yield 23 billion dollars a year (according to the National Drug Intelligence Center at the US Department of Justice), there should be strong power on both sides of the border that is willing to provide shelter, and that power should be immune to infrared detectors."

- "More threats from Chavez"

An editorial in daily-of-record "La Nación" reads (10/29) "Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has aggressively and in many ways violated the region's principle of non intervention in the domestic issues of other countries.

"His firebrand rhetoric seems unlimited. Just a few days ago, he pointed out from the Cuban city of Santa Clara, on his 'Alo president' radio program, that if someone attempts to 'oust' Evo Morales, he will not remain idle. He even added that he is willing to 'use machine guns' and he then labeled that probable intervention a 'machine gun-Vietnam' in Bolivia.

"Chavez's threatening statement, which suggests the use of weapons in a country that is not his own, deserves unanimous repudiation because, in addition to Venezuela's remarkable arms race, it implies a clear threat to regional peace and security, which should concern us all..."

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